

Quick Guide: Coaching a Junior

So, as an experienced employee, with superior skills, you've been selected to coach the junior in your team. It might sound like a doddle – especially as you've been doing the job for ages - except unless you plan, and consider what they need to know (rather than what is nice to know), their learning might be disjointed or sporadic. So here are the **top ten tips** to help you coach a junior member of the team:

- 1. Meet with your HR and training teams** to decide exactly what competences this junior will need to have after their time with you. Maybe there is a checklist of tasks to learn and skills to be developed, that is already in place? If not, agree one.
- 2. Agree with HR** exactly where your responsibilities and accountabilities begin and end. For example, are you solely responsible for the junior's workload? Are you accountable for behaviours and attitudes?
- 3. Write down what you do** and how you do it, so you can pass it on – you may not know yourself! This will help when you have to explain processes and procedures.
- 4. To ensure success** and as part of your own development, work out how you are going to demonstrate that your junior has made progress. The checklist or competence overview (point 1 above) will help.
- 5. Remember that everyone learns differently.** You might like to write things down, some like to get their hands dirty straight away, others like a combination of these. Agree or trial with your junior what the best way is for them.
- 6. Let your junior know how they are doing** – motivating them is one of your key responsibilities – and constructive feedback is essential.
- 7. Invite opinions and suggestions from your junior** – just because you have always done something a particular way doesn't mean there isn't a better way!
- 8. Helpful feedback is vital.** That means it has to be regular, motivating, honest and actionable. Only when feedback is actionable can your junior improve.
- 9. They are bound to make a few mistakes as they learn** – these are not a crime! Ask them to run through with you what they have done and to identify how they can avoid the mistake in the future.
- 10. The golden rule** is to catch them doing things right! And then praise them for it – preferably in public.

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